

April 2, 2019

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Serrano,

I write regarding the Department's testimony before the Subcommittee on the President's Fiscal Year 2020 budget request. After careful consideration, I offered to make the Deputy Secretary of Commerce and my "number two" at the Department, Karen Dunn Kelley, available to testify. Deputy Secretary Kelley is the Chief Operating Officer of the Department and has provided leadership in managing the development of the Department's FY 2020 budget.

When I learned that the Subcommittee found Deputy Secretary Kelley unacceptable as a witness, despite her deep expertise in Department-wide budget and management issues, I directed the Department to make nine bureau heads available to testify on budget issues. Indeed, pursuant to the Department's agreement with the Senate Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies, these witnesses today appeared at that Subcommittee's budget hearing and answered all of the majority and minority members' questions.

Unfortunately, the House Subcommittee appears unwilling to receive any of these witnesses to answer its budget and operations questions. Instead, the Subcommittee apparently intends to recognize an "empty chair," thereby forgoing the opportunity to ask meaningful questions about the Department's budget and operations priorities. This development affirms that my appearance at this time would unfortunately distract from the Department's important business before the Subcommittee.

Therefore, out of respect for this Subcommittee, its mission, and the mission of the Department, I ask that you reconsider my offer to allow the bureau heads who testified today before the Senate Subcommittee to testify at the House Subcommittee's hearing tomorrow. I am confident that they will answer the Subcommittee's questions as clearly and effectively as they did today before the Senate Subcommittee.

You and I both care deeply about the Commerce Department's mission and budget, and I know our bureau heads can provide all the information your members need to carry out their appropriations duties. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member